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SUBJECT: A/S SILVERBERG VISIT TO BRATISLAVA: SLOVAKIA HOLDS  
MIDDLE GROUND ON UNSC ISSUES

REF: USUN NEW YORK 424

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The March 5-7 Bratislava visit of IO A/S Kristen Silverberg provided the occasion to engage Slovakia on UNSC issues, congratulate the country on two successful months at the table, and coordinate our approaches to the upcoming challenges of the Council's agenda. A/S Silverberg urged the Slovaks to engage actively in New York on the range of issues. Slovak interlocutors repeatedly framed the country as an "honest broker" attempting to occupy the middle ground among the U.S., Europe, and Russia. The consultations centered around several themes important to Slovakia:

- KOSOVO: The Slovaks expressed in private the same sentiments political officials -- including Minister Kukan -- have been making in public: that they are concerned that the U.S. is moving too quickly towards a negotiated independence for Kosovo that will leave the Serbs feeling disenfranchised.

They emphasized that they are not "pro-Serb," but are concerned with a "spillover effect" in other areas of "frozen conflict" in the region. However, at the end of the discussion, they acknowledged that an internationally "forced" solution would allow Serbia to move forward without accepting responsibility domestically.

- IRAN: The Slovaks have identified Iran as a particular area of concern, both at the UNSC and IAEA (where they serve on the Board of Governors).

- SECURITY SECTOR REFORM: Slovakia has identified "security sector reform" as a possible theme for its UNSC presidency. They suggest a PRST on best practices regarding reform of the military in countries in transition, borrowing from eastern Europe's successful efforts. A/S Silverberg agreed to close contacts on the subject. END SUMMARY.

SLOVAKIA HOPES BOLTON INITIATIVES WILL CONTINUE  
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12. (SBU) During IO A/S Kristen Silverberg's March 5-7 visit to Bratislava, Slovak officials repeatedly voiced their opinion -- and sought confirmation -- that Slovakia had served admirably in its first two months on the UNSC "thanks to Ambassador Bolton," MFA Director General Anton Pinter commented. The Slovaks were also eager to discuss their priorities for the Council, namely the western Balkans (Kosovo), Iran, and the export of "security sector reform. The Slovaks have a favorable view on the U.S. presidency in February, noting that the discipline brought by Ambassador Bolton to the Council needed to be maintained in the future. The mentioned Slovakia's wish to be "as active and effective as possible" during the next two years.

KOSOVO SLOVAKIA'S MAIN CONCERN

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¶3. (SBU) The dominant topic on the Slovak agenda at all levels was Kosovo. State Secretary (Deputy Foreign Minister) Magda Vasaryova told Silverberg that Slovakia remains wary of the speed of the negotiation process, noting that the situation is still "unstable" and that Slovakia -- which continues to have troops on the ground as part of the UN PKO there -- recognizes that "how to solve the situation is one question; the solution itself is another." Vasaryova emphasized that Slovakia is not "pro-Serb," and that critics similarly tried to paint the country as "pro-Croat" during the early 1990's.

¶4. (SBU) Instead, Slovakia is trying to view Kosovo "as the complex situation that it is." Vasaryova said she agrees with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk, who told her last month that Kosovo will have an impact in other "frozen conflict" areas like Transnistria and the Caucasus. Slovakia will continue to pursue a role as an "honest broker," and UNSC Coordinator Marcel Pesko told Silverberg that a Serb delegation will visit Bratislava April 11-12 to discuss the "UN aspects" of the negotiation process. Silverberg encouraged the Slovaks to continue to actively engage the Serbs on the need for resolution. Pesko noted that Kosovo -- unlike other UN issues -- could have domestic political ramifications for Slovakia.

#### AVOIDING A TRANSATLANTIC RIFT ON IRAN

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¶5. (SBU) Pesko told Silverberg that Slovakia's main ambition in the Council is to avoid any "Transatlantic rift" of opinions on issues like Kosovo and Iran. While Slovakia is preparing for the challenges that Iran's nuclear program

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will pose to the Security Council over the course of the coming months, it is also seized with the issue of dialogue between the EU and the Muslim world. Our interlocutors noted that they feel Slovakia -- with a negligible Muslim population and little trade with the region -- might be suited to serve as a non-controversial leader within the EU on the topic, as it would be nearly free from domestic fallout.

¶6. (SBU) Silverberg took every opportunity to explain the USG position on Iran. Pesko said that Slovakia agrees that a Presidential Statement is needed, but added that Slovakia is concerned about the speed with which sanctions could be levied. "This is the stick," he noted, "but where is the carrot?" A/S Silverberg reminded Slovaks of the history of unsuccessful EU3-Russian engagement with Iran, leading to the necessity of UNSC action. Pinter allowed that the Slovaks -- like the Americans -- cannot accept the fact that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

#### SLOVAKIA DISAGREES ON HRC

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¶7. (SBU) UN and International Organizations Director Roman Buzek told Silverberg that Slovakia and the U.S. are not in full agreement on the creation of a Human Rights Council (HRC), as Slovakia fully endorses the EU position. Slovakia agrees that the current Commission on Human Rights should be disbanded after one final "ceremonial" meeting, but said that while it thinks the proposal by Eliasson is not "ideal" and is only a marginal improvement on the existing body, it is the best available and Slovakia will vote for it. Slovakia suggests that a 5 year review of the new body could be performed, at which point the body could be modified; however, they believe that voting against the current proposal would only set back the reform of the current structure. Silverberg and the Ambassador pressured the Slovaks at some length on the need for a credible council, pointing out that Eliasson's proposal was not negotiated, and

that he could introduce a new proposal to guarantee the credibility of the HRC.

#### LISTENING MODE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

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¶18. (SBU) Slovak interlocutors joked that the country was lucky it was "only" Vice Chairman of the 1636 Committee, and clearly felt a lack of confidence on the issues, telling Silverberg they were in "listening mode" and were curious about the USG position. Silverberg explained that Syria must fully comply with all UNSC resolutions, must stop meddling in Lebanese affairs, and that it must commit to 100 percent cooperation -- and nothing less -- with the Brammurtz investigation. On Hamas, Slovakia reiterated its "full agreement" with the U.S.

#### NON-PROLIFERATION AND THE 1540 COMMITTEE

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¶19. (SBU) Similar to an approach made to USUN last week (reftel), our interlocutors at all levels asked about the "future" of the 1540 Committee, which Slovakia chairs. Vasaryova asked Silverberg what the U.S. thought its new aim and focus could be. Silverberg replied that the USG was still considering internally whether to support changes to make the committee more effective, but that the U.S. may well come forward soon with suggestions.

#### NO DISAGREEMENT ON DARFUR

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¶10. (SBU) Silverberg pressured Slovaks on support for USG efforts on Darfur. Pinter said there would be "no disagreement."

¶11. (U) A/S Silverberg cleared this cable.  
VALLEE